**The Development of the Freedom of the Press**

- Before the Stamp Act of 1765, most printers in the colonies treated newspapers as any ordinary printing job that is similar to books and pamphlets.  
- The majority of the information in the newspapers had reprints of other publications, stories of local interest, literature, ads, and opinions.  
- the printers became publishers with the introduction of the Stamp Act.  
- Samuel Adams roused the people by using the colonial press to resist the Stamp Act which eventually was repealed.

- The American Revolution produced several historic newspapermen who wrote about their strong feelings in support of independence and revolution which spurred public interest and education on the issue. In the essence, this was the beginning of the press’ role with the government, developing the press freedom that would later be set in the Constitution.  
- After the Revolution, newspapers reported the financial difficulties created by the worthless American currency and argued against new stamp taxes.

- Even though, the Constitution had a clause for freedom of the press in the Bill of Rights, the government still set controls on the press and quieted the opinions of most early journalists.

- Later, the First Amendment set aside when the federal government quieted the press through the Sedition Act of 1978, which made any speech or writings against the U.S. government unlawful.  
- Before the 1930s, the Supreme Court position on First Amendment freedoms was to suspend free speech and press if the expressions constituted a “reasonable tendency” to endanger society. These expressions were judged by whether they created a “clear and present danger” to society.  
\*This was the beginning of press freedom in America, the evolution of the “Fourth Estate”.